

April 2, 1971

Dr. DeWitt Stetten, Jr.
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Dear Hans,

I was very pleased to have a chance to talk with you at some length early this week.

Enclosed is the article on the role of "Genetic Engineering" that I mentioned to you. I agree that Watson in his new found discovery that scientific advances can have human impact may be making some adolescent mischief. I have been trying to cope with this for quite some time.

I recall that you had mentioned four major areas of work that you regarded as the main foci of a program in genetics. According to my chaotic notes these were 1) mapping, 2) heterozygote detection, 3) regulatory effects, and 4) the cell bank. I think I may have gotten confused as among different aspects of the program, for my note indicates that these were the areas in which contract funding would be most appropriate and I am a little puzzled about the distinction between that and the overall texture of the program. If the latter is in question, I would think it important to place special emphasis on at least two additional areas, the nature of the genetic load, and the extent to which it is manifest as somatic complement. Closely connected with this, since we do not have a clear idea of the fraction of the genetic load that depends on recurrent mutation, is the problem of environmental mutagenesis, the ultimate source of genetic deterioration through lesions in the DNA and chromosomes.

I am mindful that you had also mentioned the possibility of invigorating a number of specific centers where basic and clinically oriented work might better be correlated, and I will be writing to you further on this score within the next two weeks.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Enclosure
JL/rr

STETTEN, DeWitt